

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) for
National Science Foundation (NSF) Proposers and Awardees
March 16, 2020**

The following addresses questions associated with the NSF proposal and award process that may arise in relation to COVID-19. Given that COVID-19 and the associated impacts continue to evolve, proposers and awardees are strongly encouraged to monitor [NSF's website](#) for updates.

Unless announced on NSF's website (<https://www.nsf.gov/>), proposal deadlines, target dates, and submission windows remain unchanged. NSF will continue to review proposals using *ad hoc* reviews and virtual panels, enabling the agency to maintain a high-quality and timely merit review process.

1. I have a question related to COVID-19's potential impact on my research project, project-related travel, or field work. Where are some of the places I can find helpful information?

Your employing organization is an ideal starting point. In many cases, institutions of higher education have created websites offering information.

Beyond that, we encourage you to consult the following resources:

- COVID-19 in general: see the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) websites, and also refer to your state or local health department;
- Travel to/from and quarantine in foreign countries: see the [State Department Travel Advisories website](#); and
- NSF website: NSF-funded facilities may post guidance for users of the facilities on their websites, and NSF will update this document with pointers to that information as it becomes available.

2. Will NSF provide for an extension to my award if the planned activities are disrupted by the COVID-19 public health threat?

All NSF grants are eligible for a one-year grantee-approved no-cost extension and then further extensions as approved by NSF. If you foresee a need for NSF-approved extensions, you should include that information in your annual report and discuss the need ahead of time with the cognizant NSF program officer for your award. See the [Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG), Chapter VI.D.3, for additional information.

3. I am a PI on an NSF-funded Conference or Travel award, but the meeting has been canceled. Who do I contact regarding the impact to the NSF award?

You should contact the cognizant NSF program officer about this situation. In light of the public health threat, you may wish to consider alternate plans, such as providing or using options for virtual participation. In addition, NSF program officers will be open to rescheduling the conference or using the funds for a future meeting that is consistent with the original scope and objectives of the award.

4. A conference has been canceled, but I have nonrefundable travel and/or hotel costs. Can these be charged to an NSF Conference or Travel grant?

NSF is currently working internally as well as with our federal partners on a number of proposal and award-related issues pertaining to COVID-19. NSF will communicate with the community about these issues and will provide guidance as further information becomes available. In the meantime, please continue to follow all relevant policies and procedures, including those of your organization, and apply those practices consistently.

5. I am involved with a Conference or Travel award for a meeting that is taking place in the coming weeks. Should I continue with plans for the meeting?

NSF recommends first reaching out to the conference organizer or host. They are best equipped to understand the guidance at the location of the event. They may recommend having contingency plans if the event is ultimately cancelled or re-located, or might be planning to provide options for virtual participation. If you are the organizer, you may wish to consider developing contingency plans.

We also suggest checking the [State Department Travel Advisories website](#) if the conference involves foreign travel.

6. I am considering submitting a Conference or Travel proposal to NSF for a future meeting. The site of the meeting has not yet been selected; should I take into account COVID-19 in conference planning and site selection?

Travel logistics, accessibility, and health and safety considerations of the participants should always be a foremost consideration in any Conference proposal. Since the COVID-19 threat is still evolving, it is important to consider flexibility and alternative plans in a proposal to support travel or a conference. For foreign travel, you should consult the [State Department Travel Advisories website](#).

7. My NSF grant involves an exchange of researchers (including students) and/or other foreign travel. Should I continue with plans?

Travel logistics, accessibility, and health and safety considerations of the participants in an active research project should always be a foremost consideration. NSF recommends consulting with your organization about its policies and procedures. You may consider approaching the planned researcher exchanges and/or other foreign travel with flexibility, and/or devising alternate plans including virtual participation as appropriate. As noted above, NSF understands that plans for active research projects may be disrupted, to the point of needing extensions on the original award durations. For foreign travel, you should consult the [State Department Travel Advisories website](#).

8. I have plans to attend a large scientific gathering. Should I continue?

As noted previously, NSF recommends first consulting with your organization about its policies and practices. In addition, you may consider reaching out to the organizer or host of the scientific gathering. They are best equipped to understand the guidance at the location of the event. They may have contingency plans if the event is ultimately canceled or re-located, or they might be planning to provide options for virtual participation. We also suggest checking the [State Department Travel Advisories website](#) if the gathering involves foreign travel.

9. I am quarantined for a period of time. There is an NSF proposal deadline during my quarantine period and some essential materials I need are in my office. Can I receive an extension to the deadline?

Researchers or sponsored projects office staff from organizations that have been directly affected and are unable to meet stated NSF deadlines should contact the cognizant NSF program officer to discuss the issue. NSF will consider extensions to the submission deadline on a case-by-case basis (and, in a few cases, on a program-by-program basis), understanding that it may be particularly difficult for individuals impacted to contact NSF. See NSF [PAPPG](#) Chapter I.F for additional information on procedures for submitting such requests.

10. My university has asked staff to stay home for an undetermined period of time. How would I petition for an extension of a proposal deadline?

Researchers or sponsored projects office staff from organizations that have been affected and are unable to meet stated NSF deadlines should contact the cognizant NSF program office to discuss the issue. NSF will consider extensions to the submission deadline on a case-by-case basis (and, in a few cases, on a program-by-program basis), understanding that it may be particularly difficult for individuals impacted to contact NSF. See NSF [PAPPG](#) Chapter I.F for additional information on procedures for submitting such requests.

- 11. I am hosting a Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Site. If a student arrives who appears sick, can I ask them to return home?**

Please follow the appropriate policies and practices of your organization. More generally, NSF defers to awardees on decisions regarding the safety and security of their faculty, students, and personnel.

- 12. I am hosting a REU Site or similar activity involving the participation of non-local students. A student from another institution arrived and appeared to be ill. Health authorities have ordered that the student be quarantined. Can I use the REU Site grant funds to cover the cost of housing and meals during the quarantine period, even though the student is unable to participate in REU Site (or other) activities?**

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- 13. I am a PI for an NSF REU Site, Conference, or other distributed collaborative research project. I am considering replacing the face-to-face interaction with the use of virtual technology. Beyond simple videoconferencing, I would like to use augmented reality or other technology to make the interactions more effective. May I submit a supplemental funding request to purchase and distribute the necessary equipment and/or contract with a service provider?**

Contact the cognizant NSF program officer managing your award. Supplements can be made to address unexpected events that threaten the original scope and objectives of an award but are contingent on the availability of funding.

- 14. How will COVID-19 impact previously scheduled site visits?**

For any previously scheduled site visits, NSF staff will contact the awardee to make alternative arrangements, such as videoconferencing, to meet with the project team and review documentation. In cases where the presence of NSF staff on site is essential, NSF staff may make an in-person visit at a later date.